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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the need to improve the cultural proficiency of high school students studying French, a 12-week unit was developed and implemented to teach the cultures of francophone countries to 20 randomly selected first-level students. A survey and pretest were administered to determine students' ability to demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of French-speaking countries and people. The teaching strategy for the unit used a combination of student-centered activities such as dialogues, skits, minidramas, research projects, group discussions, and an interaction with another language class. A portable language lab with wireless headsets and cassette tape recorders facilitated a variety of simultaneous activities. Individual and group activities and a posttest measured the outcomes. Improvements in students' cultural proficiency were found in the following areas: ability to recognize and locate francophone countries on a world map; ability to describe in both oral and written forms cultural patterns of French-speaking people; and ability to express ideas about diverse aspects of life in francophone countries. Appendices contain the student survey, questionnaire, world map, and test. Contains 26 references. (LB)

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Teaching the Cultures of Francophone Countries to High School French Students through Group Activities

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A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Brenda J. Pulliam under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

March 19 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm. W. Anderson
Dr. William W. Anderson

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ABSTRACT

Teaching the Cultures of Francophone Countries to High School French Students Through Group Activities. Pulliam, Brenda J., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Foreign Language Curriculum/Cultural Awareness/Ethnology/Cross-cultural Understanding/Francophone/Secondary Education/Foreign Culture/Instructional Materials/Language Proficiency/Modern Language Curriculum/Culture/Classroom Techniques/Cultural Education/Teaching Methods/Second Language Instruction

This practicum addresses the need to improve the cultural proficiency of high school students studying French. The writer developed and implemented a twelve-week unit designed to teach the cultures of francophone countries to 20 randomly selected first-level students.

The writer developed and administered a survey and a pretest to determine the difficulty of students to demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for French-speaking countries and people. Individual and group activities and a posttest measured the outcomes of the implementation.

Analysis of the evaluative data indicated an improvement in students' level of cultural proficiency. They displayed an increased ability to recognize and locate francophone countries on a world map, to describe in both oral and written forms cultural patterns of French-speaking people, and to express ideas about diverse aspects of life in francophone countries.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community and Work Setting

The economic life of the community from its settlement in the early 1800s until the late 1950s depended largely upon agriculture and dairy farming. The sudden and unexpected emergence of a nearby community as a major commercial and transportation hub, however, changed life forever for this community, formerly serene and unpretentious, into a bulging suburb as residential demands quickly exceeded the limits of the larger city and spread to this community. Its small-town ambience gave way to the demands of urban sprawl as pastoral scenes began to be replaced by myriads of subdivisions, shopping and business centers, parking lots, and highways. Except for its history and the preservation of a few landmarks, nothing remains to give the town any particular distinction. In fact, today the area is so populous it is virtually impossible to determine visually where one community ends and another begins. Therefore, a view of the population growth of the entire county is more meaningful than that of the community. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the residents live in single-family dwellings

outside the city limits of the town renders less significance to the population of the incorporated city limits, 3280, according to the 1990 census. Table 1 shows the population growth of the county in the past 60 years.

Table 1

Population Growth of the County

Year	Population
1940	11,500
1950	28,000
1960	46,000
1970	98,000
1980	150,000
1990	190,000

Two-thirds of the labor force of this predominantly middle class suburb is employed in services, transportation, public utilities, the retail trade, and government. The average annual income per household is $35,000.

The work setting is a public high school in this suburban community of a large metropolitan area in a Southern state. The school, whose history can be traced back to the late 1800s, has evolved to the present enrollment of approximately 1625 students in grades 9-12. Built in 1963

and renovated in 1980, the school is one of seven comprehensive high schools in the county educational system of 138,000 students. Operating on the quarter system, the school offers curriculum tracks for general study, college preparatory, and vocational training.

The 108 members of the instructional staff of the school include 4 administrators, 4 counselors, 2 media specialists, and 98 teachers. Twenty-nine other employees provide support services. Fifty-eight of the faculty members have earned advanced degrees: 48 have master's degrees and 10 have specialist degrees, 2 of whom are pursuing doctoral degrees. Forty percent of the faculty members have taught in the school more than 10 years. Like the student body, there is an ethnic diversity among the staff.

The burgeoning of community growth has affected, not only the physical appearance of the land, but also the character of the population. While the number of Whites and Blacks has remained relatively proportionate, the influx of ethnic groups, especially Hispanics and Orientals, is increasing. Five years ago the representation of any minority except Black was less than 1%. Table 2 illustrates present student ethnic distribution.

Table 2

Present Student Ethnic Distribution

Ethnic background	Percent
Caucasian	75
Black	16
Hispanic	5
Oriental	4

Although the population of the community has almost quadrupled in the past 28 years, the length of the writer's tenure at the school, the number of students has remained fairly consistent because of a continual building program required to accommodate the rapidly growing numbers of students in the system. In fact, 11 teachers have been transferred from the school to new schools for the 1991-92 academic year, an action that has ramifications for the school of the writer. Namely, some teachers will have larger classes and an additional teaching assignment.

The Writer's Role in the Work Setting

The writer is a French teacher with 29 years of teaching experience and has chaired the Foreign Language Department, composed of five teachers, for the past 23 years. Presently 35% of the students are enrolled in French, Latin,

or Spanish, which are available through the fourth level of study. A state mandate allows a maximum of 28 students in a foreign language class.

The teaching assignment of the writer for the 1991-92 school year is two classes each of levels I and II French and one class of level III French. As the proficiency-oriented approach to foreign language teaching is being implemented, her role includes that of learning model and facilitator in a setting where student-centered activities replace the traditional teacher-centered classroom. Also, the writer serves as academic adviser to 16 students.

As chair, she is responsible for the monitoring of adherence to state and county mandates governing the department and serving as liaison between the department and administration, both on the school and county levels. In addition, it is the responsibility of the writer to maintain departmental records, develop an annual budget, as well as order, distribute, supervise the use and care of, and store equipment and supplies.

Professional preparation includes a bachelor's degree in French and English and a master's degree in French. Through the auspices of a federal grant she has also studied at a university in France. Professional competence has been enhanced by coordinating and leading student study abroad programs and adult goodwill exchanges between France and the United States, by personal travel to several European

countries, by serving on committees to develop and revise the Teacher Certification Test in French, by participating in staff development programs, by developing and revising county and state foreign language curricula, by judging local and state foreign language competitions, and by active membership in professional organizations.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Students in the writer's level I French class had difficulty in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of cultural concepts of French-speaking people. Specifically, they were unable to recognize or locate francophone countries on a map or to express accurate ideas about diverse aspects of life in francophone countries. The reasons that the problem had not been solved included the low priority given by some teachers to the teaching of culture and the lack of student initiative for self-directed study. In brief, the writer's students in level I French had a problem in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the cultures of French-speaking people.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem was documented in part by the results of a survey administered to a random sample of 50 level I French students in May of 1991. Results of the survey (see Appendix A) indicated that 41 of the 50 could name fewer than six francophone countries (see item 4) and only 2 could name more than three important French-speaking

people in history (see item 9). Even though there were Haitian students in two of the three French classes from which the sample was taken, only 4 of the 16 students who reported that they were personally acquainted with a French-speaking person listed Haiti as the country of that person (see item 2). Of the 29 who indicated that they communicated with another in French outside of class (see item 1), 25 of those admitted that the conversation was solely with the teacher. Only 3 had ever hosted a guest from a French-speaking country (see item 12). The results of a questionnaire (see Appendix B) administered in May of 1991 were also used to document evidence of the problem. Thirty-seven of the 50 students in the sample could identify the location of no more than 7 of the 12 French-speaking areas indicated on a map, and 19 could name fewer than 6 (see item A). Table 3 identifies the number of correct choices made by the students.

Table 3

Map Location of Francophone Areas by 50 Students

Area	Respondents making correct choices
France	48
Louisiana	48
Quebec	43

(table continues)

Area	Respondents making correct choices
Switzerland	36
Belgium	35
Haiti	29
Guyana	18
Tahiti	17
Martinique	11
Ivory Coast	10
Mali	9
Senegal	5

Item B on the questionnaire refers to assessment of students' knowledge of culture not relating to map study. Table 4 shows the results of students' ability to define terms that refer to culture.

Table 4

Cultural Terms Correctly Defined by 50 Students

Term	Number of correct answers
Culture	44
Culture shock	22

(table continues)

Term	Number of correct answers
Bilingual	28
Francophone	2

While Louisiana was identified by 45 of the students as the American state with the greatest number of French-speaking people (see item B6), only 9 knew that Haiti was the first black republic (see item B9). No student knew the correct number of French-speaking countries in Africa, and 49 believed there were eight or fewer (see item B7). Only 9 could identify both Paris and Montreal as the largest French-speaking cities in the world, and 7 could name neither one (see item B10).

Examination of item C revealed that 12 could correctly match seven or more city-country combinations. Responses to item E regarding life in francophone countries showed that 34 responded correctly to 11 or more of the 15 statements.

A third method of gathering data to document the problem was based upon information acquired from interviews with five other foreign language teachers and eight social studies teachers. They concurred unanimously that most of their students did not display knowledge and understanding of

foreign cultures within a 70% ability range as determined by their evaluations of student progress.

The survey, questionnaire, and interviews served to support the central thesis that the writer's students in the sample did not possess knowledge and understanding of the cultures of francophone countries. In fact, only 6 of the 50 students scored 70% or better on the questionnaire.

Causative Analysis

It was the contention of the writer that there were five possible causes for the problem. One cause was the prevailing attitude of the nation's monolinguistic, monocultural insensitivity causing a lack of interest in foreign cultures. Students' lack of interest in studying foreign languages and their ethnocentrism attested to the national linguistic scarcity. A second cause for the problem was the lack of recognition of and appreciation for the rich resources of the divergent ethnic elements within the American culture, a situation which inhibited willingness of students to become interested in foreign cultures. Of the 13 teachers interviewed for the purpose of this practicum, all but 1 agreed that minority students, especially immigrants, were generally viewed with disdain, distrust, and fear. A third cause was the inadequate or incorrect information about foreign cultures offered by some textbooks. In examining French textbooks the writer found examples of both word and picture inaccuracies and misleading statements made by some

authors about people and cultures of francophone countries . A fourth cause for the problem was the disposition of some students to pass judgment on people from foreign cultures based on stereotypic ideas. Students in the sample attested to their own tendency to stereotype French-speaking people by using the terms "strange," "picky," "snobbish," "vain," "rude," "ugly," "hateful," "behind the times," "socially inhibited," and "stubborn" to describe them. A fifth cause of the problem was the low priority given by some teachers to the teaching of culture. With the exception of three Spanish teachers, each a native speaker who grew up in a Spanish-speaking country, the teachers interviewed by the writer for this practicum expressed a reluctance to teach culture to their classes except for cultural material provided in textbooks used by their students. When pressed for an explanation, they cited fear of making blunders, lack of time, and little personal interest as reasons. In the specific case of the students of the writer, their inability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of francophone countries appeared to relate to some of the causes for the problem delineated by the writer.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature provides evidence of the problem. Enwall (1981), Hubbard (1981), and Jackson (1981) discuss the lack of and need for cultural knowledge. They concur that there is an urgency that Americans become

familiar with other cultures as a sound investment in the future of America. Enwall and Jackson stress the need for cultural knowledge to increase mutuality and reciprocity in international relations, while Hubbard insists that Americans' knowledge of foreign culture is the key to understanding and sensitizes students to recognize and appreciate others' cultural patterns. Other literature gives evidence to the problem of deficiency of cultural awareness of American students. Cooper (1985) offers evidence of foreign language teachers' frustration in attempting to teach culture to students whose responses are often negative; and Galloway (1985) observes that dealing with student attitudes can be intimidating to some teachers in a indistinct, indeterminable way. Even though 1 out of every 50 Americans is foreign-born, the rich linguistic resource of the U.S. is, not only not being used profitably, nor is it being preserved as a part of the diverse rich heritage of the country, according to Simon (1980). In fact, he maintains that being a native speaker of a language other than English is a long-standing matter of shame or embarrassment. Along with Byram (1989), he also reports that minority cultures are historically rejected and unappreciated as a valuable resource by the majority group.

Since the publication of the 1979 report Strength Through Wisdom by President Carter's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies that documented the

national crisis created by the inability of Americans to communicate with other peoples of the world community, language texts have gradually added cultural data. Unfortunately, however, as Morain (1983) points out, there is little intelligent, well-written cultural material included in texts; and Omaggio (1986) decries the inefficient treatment of cultural themes in textbooks. Furthermore, according to Walz (1991), many textbooks contain examples of misinformation, stereotyping, and cultural inferiority that convey a condescending attitude toward francophone cultures. Ramirez and Hall (1990) concur that knowledge of culture-specific information is unavailable to the profession of foreign language teaching at large and insist that a dearth of accurate, non-biased cultural content of texts prohibits any orderly teaching of cultural themes.

The literature reveals further evidence of the problem. Brown (1987) cites the frequency of unwarranted stereotypic perceptions concerning people of foreign cultures, while Lado (1986) delineates instances of misinterpretation occurring among people of different cultures. Morain (1983) and Strasheim (1985) reveal that some high school foreign language teachers allocate little instructional time for teaching culture. Omaggio (1986) cites reasons for teachers' failure to incorporate culture in the course of study. They include teachers' feeling that the demands imposed by the required curriculum do not leave time for the addition of any

extras and teachers' fear that they do not possess adequate knowledge to teach culture.

That the problem existed is supported by the literature. According to Simon (1980), students' inability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the cultures of francophone countries contributes inestimably to the country's being a "linguistic wasteland," a term that he attributes to Rose Hayden, a nationally recognized leader of educational reform.

The literature reveals several causes for the problem. Simon (1980), Jordan (1982), and Guntermann (1985) offer examples of the handicaps suffered by the U.S. as a result of the inability of leaders to confer in another language. They include loss of international prestige, failure to negotiate successful trade agreements, inability to match language capacity with technical knowledge of other countries, and increasing distrust of Americans in general. Cooper (1985) contends that until learners recognize the significance of the many-faceted character of their own culture they are likely to resist accepting the value of other cultures. Walz (1991) maintains that textbooks which inaccurately portray the lifestyle of a people may effect the attitude of the second language learner. Cooper (1985) suggests that students' ability to accept ideas of other cultures may be impeded by the fact that they come to class with stereotypic notions. According to Fryer (1982), Kramsch (1983), and Byram (1989), language students are exposed to foreign

culture only passively in the classroom, thereby leaving them with the impression that the study of culture is unimportant.

The literature review supports the writer's position that there was a lack of and need for cultural knowledge and understanding. In addition, the literature offers evidence of the existence as well as causes for the problem. The emphasis on the teaching of culture that proliferated with the launching of Sputnik in 1957 has taken on a new dimension in the light of the concept of proficiency that became the basic issue in foreign language teaching with the publication of Strength through Wisdom. No longer a separate entity of the foreign language curriculum, the teaching of culture in a contemporary foreign language classroom is a basic component of the proficiency-oriented approach and is taught as an essential element of the basic language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, as the teaching of culture has remained rather ineffective and sporadic, the successful integration of the teaching of culture into the proficiency-oriented foreign language program is one that deserves top priority by teachers sensitive to the needs of students to succeed in a global society in flux. The commitment of foreign language teachers to prepare students for this global, interdependent society presupposes a commitment to culture.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The following goal and expected outcomes were projected for this practicum.

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the writer was for students to attain cultural proficiency by demonstrating knowledge of and appreciation for French-speaking countries and people. For the purpose of this practicum, the level of proficiency was defined as the achievement of 70% mastery in the performance of the objectives relating to knowledge of French-speaking countries and people and two student-initiated projects in the performance of the objective pertaining to an appreciation for francophone cultures.

Expected Outcomes

The writer proposed that the students' proficiency regarding francophone cultures be increased by the end of the twelve-week implementation period. The sample was composed of 20 first-year French students, selected on a random basis, ranging in ages from 14-16 years in grades 9, 10, and 11.

The writer expected that at least 14 of the 20 students would achieve a 70%-level mastery in the performance of the

objectives relating to knowledge of French-speaking countries and people. When given an unlabeled world map (see Appendix C), students would demonstrate their ability to locate at least 7 out of 10 francophone countries. When given a list of African nations, students would be able to identify 7 out of 10 French-speaking countries on the list. When given a list of major French-speaking cities and countries, students would be able to match correctly at least 7 out of 10. When given a list of true/false statements referring to francophone cultures, students would be able to respond correctly 7 out of 10 times. When given 10 terms that apply to various aspects of francophone cultures and to French-speaking people, students would be able to identify at least 7 of the terms. When given a list of words relating to culture in general, students would be able to define correctly at least 7 out of 10.

The writer expected that at least 14 out of 20 students would achieve the objective regarding appreciation for French-speaking people. Students were expected to develop and produce evidence of at least two self-directed projects which included a copy of two letters designated for French-speaking pen pals, written documentation of a movie or travel video approved by the writer, the oral report of a book written by a francophone author and approved by the writer, and the presentation of a cultoon.

Measurement of Outcomes

The writer used a test (see Appendix E) and documented evidence of two individual projects for the purpose of measuring the outcomes of the practicum. The test included short-answer, true/false, multiple-choice, matching, and defining items. It was administered as a pretest and as a posttest for the purpose of determining the success or lack of success of the process and required one class period for administration. During the period of implementation the writer also kept a weekly journal in which she documented observations and unexpected events that affected implementation of the practicum. While almost each day during the process there was some unforeseen development or element, nothing that required a revision of strategies occurred.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem identified for this practicum was that students in the writer's level I French class had difficulty in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of cultural concepts of French-speaking people. They were unable to recognize or locate francophone countries on an unlabeled map or to express accurate ideas about diverse aspects of life in francophone countries.

A review of the literature provided evidence that the problem was an extensive one but not without possible solutions. For example, Seelye (1991) asserts that attitudes of students toward foreign cultures are improved when they encounter positive and enjoyable learning experiences. The writer designated cultural islands in the classroom and guided students in the development of dialogues, skits, cultural alphabets, and minidramas to provide classroom experiences that proved to be pleasant as well as educational. Byram (1989), Langer (1989), and Luce (1991) contend that students are motivated to accept foreign cultures when the learning experience is humanized and relevant and concur that students' creativity and imagination

are whetted when learning experiences are centered on issues they care about and can personally relate to. The writer encouraged students to develop culturally oriented projects of their own choice. Also, students enjoyed activities that included viewing contemporary films and listening to music in the target language.

Further solutions to the problem were found in the literature. Hickey (1980) and Rivers (1983) suggest that students' resistance to learning about and understanding foreign cultures can be overcome by active interactions with people from the target culture. They report that learning becomes meaningful when the barrier of artificiality of communicating with other students is removed and authentic situations become the setting for learning about the culture. The writer identified and arranged for guest speakers to allow the students personal cultural encounters. Native speakers of French shared personal insights with students, and people from the community who had firsthand experience with a French-speaking country spoke to the students and/or served as resources. Also, the students were encouraged to correspond with a pen pal from a French-speaking country.

Hughes (1984) and Omaggio (1986) advise that a variety of instructional techniques for the teaching of cultural awareness and understanding be used and urge that the format of teaching culture be purposeful and integrated into established instructional goals. Brooks (1986) advises that

the best method of teaching foreign culture is as a corollary to language learning. Admitting that haphazard, uncoordinated strategies are preferable to the total neglect of teaching culture, he contends that learning is more worthwhile when it is taught in conjunction with the basic skills of language learning. However, while most other experts in the field of culture share this view, very little literature gives concrete guidance in successfully merging culture with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Pfister and Poser (1987) iterate the essential role of the teacher "to stimulate cross-cultural awareness and foster tolerance" (p. viii). The example set by the teacher as a role model may be the initial positive influence in the lives of the students toward contributing to their gaining a global view. In addition, exposure to guest lecturers, both native speakers and those from the community who have had positive firsthand experiences with a francophone culture, provides an excellent opportunity for students to become culturally sensitive and tolerant. While knowledge of culture is valuable within itself, it is best used as a source of understanding and appreciation and recognition of inherent differences among peoples of different national origins to be used both in international diplomatic contexts and person-to-person relationships for the fostering of global friendliness.

Description of Selected Solution

In solving the problem, the writer assumed the role of facilitator, informant, and role model. The teaching strategy used was a combination of student-centered activities such as dialogues, skits, minidramas, research projects, group discussions, and an interaction with another language class. Having successfully utilized interactive strategies on numerous occasions in the teaching of the basic skills of foreign language learning and having found an adequate body of research substantiating the value of interactive learning, the writer was confident of the potential success of her choice of solution to the problem and the attainment of the goal for students' knowledge of and appreciation for French-speaking countries and people to be improved.

It was the writer's belief that her solution to the problem was ideal in her setting. The writer received confirmation of the support of the administration and members of the Foreign Language Department prior to implementation. The classroom, a renovated laboratory, contained ample space for the unconstricted movement of the students and for displaying and storing materials supplied by the writer and those created by the students. A portable language lab with wireless headsets and cassette tape recorders facilitated a variety of simultaneous activities pertinent to the accomplishment of the practicum.

Report of Action Taken

The projected timeline for the implementation period was 12 weeks. The target group was composed of 20 first-year French students, selected on a random basis, ranging in age from 14-16 years and in grades 9, 10, and 11.

Prior to implementation a series of procedures was followed. First, while the general plan had already been approved by the principal, the writer shared the details of the process with him in order that a positive line of communication be established between the administrative staff and the writer. Second, the plan for implementation was explained to the Instructional Lead Teacher, who then filed a copy of it. Third, a copy of required media resources was presented to the director of the media center with whom arrangements for student use of library materials were made. Next, a list of relevant resources (videotapes, audio cassettes, slides, books, magazines, etc.) was prepared; and resources for student use were gathered. Arrangements for a cultural activity with the ESOL students were discussed with the ESOL teacher. Guest speakers were identified and contacted. Teacher lesson plans were finalized to reflect the stated objectives in the proposal and to correlate with state-mandated guidelines.

During week one of the implementation period the writer provided the rationale and schema of the unit and

administered the revised survey and the test. Students were given the opportunity to ask pertinent questions.

During week two each student initiated a culture folio and participated in a group activity with three classmates to prepare statements explaining their concept of the terms "culture," "culture shock," "bilingual," "xenophobia," and "stereotype." By means of class discussion the meanings of the terms were clarified.

During week three students offered their impressions about French culture. Through class discussion students differentiated between facts and stereotypic ideas. Groups prepared examples of stereotypic ideas about French culture which they shared with the class by the presentation of dialogues or skits. Students began researching the topic of French culture.

During week four students prepared and presented dialogues and skits that depicted authentic cultural situations and completed their report on French culture.

During week five a video was used to enhance student knowledge of French culture. Group discussions involving reports on French culture evolved into the preparation of skits and minidramas that depicted different aspects of French culture.

During week six students presented their skits and minidramas and prepared for the guest speaker, who shared

personal insights into French culture. Group discussions in which students expressed reactions to the speaker followed.

During week seven students differentiated between the words "French" and "francophone" and defined "francophile," "francophobe," "negritude," and "Americanization." Students located francophone countries on a map and matched major cities of some of the countries with the country in which they are located. The writer played cassettes of music that provided an authentic view into various francophone countries.

During week eight students began researching the culture of a francophone country other than France. A video concerning a francophone country was viewed and discussed by the students in small groups. Skits and minidramas depicting a cultural episode were prepared and presented.

During week nine a cultural activity involving ESOL students was planned. A local guest who had visited a French-speaking country and one who had hosted a visitor from a francophone country shared their experiences with the class. Students wrote a composition in which they discussed their reaction to the guests.

During week ten students executed with the ESOL class the cultural activity planned earlier. Participants served as "tour guides" to the countries they represented through the ethnic dishes, clothing, musical instruments, cassettes of music, videos, maps, photos, and other authentic realia

which they brought for the occasion. Also, the students completed their reports on the culture of a francophone country and presented their findings in the form of a chart. Audio cassettes were used to enhance student knowledge and understanding of the cultures of francophone countries.

During week eleven students completed their cultural folios and alphabets. They also shared information and reactions about pen pals and other unique experiences relating to the unit.

During week twelve cultural folios and alphabets were used as sources for a summative discussion and review. The test was re-administered, and results of the posttest were compared to those of the pretest to determine the degree of success of the implementation process.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem identified for this practicum was that the writer's level I French students had difficulty in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of cultural concepts of French-speaking people. Specifically, they were unable to recognize or locate francophone areas on a map or to express accurate ideas about diverse aspects of life in francophone countries.

In solving the problem the writer designed and implemented a twelve-week unit of study focusing on the use of a combination of student-centered activities. Having found an ample body of research to substantiate the value of interactive learning in the foreign language classroom and having previously encountered success in using these teaching techniques, the writer proceeded in the development of this unit designed to improve the cultural proficiency of level I students of high school French.

While the writer established the guidelines and evaluation procedures, the students assumed responsibility in the formulation and execution of the unit itself. The nature of cooperative learning techniques allowed the students to

exercise an active role in the learning process, thus allowing them substantial flexibility in making decisions about their individual performance and those that affected their peers as well. While the students were expected to perform some tasks on an individual basis, the essence of the work focused on a number of cooperative ventures by the students, including pair work, small group projects, and whole class activities.

The cooperative learning strategies used included dialogues, skits, minidramas, self-directed projects, group discussions, and interactions with people from cultures other than the students'. During the twelve-week implementation period the writer served as learning facilitator, informant, and role model. The target group was composed of 20 randomly selected students enrolled in her level I French classes. The evaluation process indicated that the strategies used to improve the cultural proficiency of the students produced favorable results as evidenced by their achievement of the objectives devised by the writer.

The goal established by the writer was for students to improve their cultural proficiency within a twelve-week implementation period to the degree that they were able to demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for French-speaking countries and people. The acceptable level of proficiency established for the purpose of this practicum was the achievement of a minimum of 70% mastery by 14 out of 20

students of the six objectives relating to knowledge of French-speaking countries and people as ascertained by the evaluation of student performance on the posttest and evidence of at least two student-initiated projects by 14 out of 20 students in the performance of the one objective pertaining to an appreciation for francophone countries. The details of each of the objectives and the results are as follows:

Objective 1: students were expected to demonstrate their ability to identify French-speaking areas on an unlabeled world map.

Results: based on item A of the posttest, 18 students were able to identify at least 7 out of 10 French-speaking areas on an unlabeled map. Ten students achieved 100% mastery.

Objective 2: students were expected to be able to identify French-speaking countries in Africa.

Results: based on item B of the posttest, all students were able to identify at least 7 out of 10 French-speaking countries in Africa. Twelve achieved at least 90% accuracy.

Objective 3: students were expected to match French-speaking cities and the country in which each city is located.

Results: based on item C of the posttest, 17 students were able to match at least 7 out of 10 city-country combinations. Ten students achieved 100% mastery.

Objective 4: students were expected to respond correctly to true/false statements referring to francophone cultures.

Results: based on item D of the posttest, 17 students responded correctly to at least 7 of the 10 statements referring to francophone cultures. Six students achieved 100% mastery.

Objective 5: students were expected to identify terms applying to various aspects of francophone cultures and to French-speaking people.

Results: based on item E of the posttest, 14 of the 20 students were able to identify at least 7 out of 10 terms applying to various aspects of francophone cultures and to French-speaking people. Seven students achieved 100% mastery.

Objective 6: students were expected to define correctly words relating to the study of culture.

Results: based on item F of the posttest, 16 students were able to define correctly at least 7 out of 10 words. Seven students achieved 100% mastery.

Objective 7: students were expected to present evidence of two self-directed projects.

Results: In order to accomplish one of the projects, each of the 20 students produced aerograms addressed to two prospective French-speaking pen pals living in francophone countries. In fulfillment of the requirement to complete a

second self-directed project, four students presented oral book reports written by a francophone author and approved by the writer; five students wrote reports about a travel video approved by the writer; three students wrote reports about a movie approved by the writer; and seven students presented cultoons. That is to say, 19 out of 20 students successfully achieved the objective regarding the demonstration of an appreciation for French-speaking people.

Discussion

Two assessment instruments were used in the implementation process of this practicum. The revised survey (see Appendix D), consisting of short-answer items, was used to asses student attitudes and knowledge about the cultures of French-speaking countries prior to implementation. A tally of the responses to items relating to students' personal interaction with the French language and French-speaking countries and people is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Tally of Revised Survey Assessing Personal Interaction of 20 Respondents with Francophone Cultures

	Respondents
Do you speak French outside of class?	1
Do you personally know a French-speaking person?	7

(table continues)

Respondents

Was a member of your family born in a French-speaking country?..... 1

Has either of your parents studied French?.....10

Have you ever been to a French-speaking country?..... 3

Has your family ever hosted a guest from a French-speaking country?..... 4

Which French-speaking country would like most to visit?

France.....18

Haiti..... 2

Canada..... 1

Ivory Coast..... 1

Results of the revised survey indicated that the students in the target group had had little interaction with francophone cultures prior to implementation. The only student who indicated that she spoke French outside of class and who had relatives born in a French-speaking country was the child of Haitian parents. Personal acquaintances of the students included three exchange students from France, four relatives from Haiti, and one friend from Canada. Of the 10 students who indicated that at least one parent had studied French, 8 reported the parent had done so in high school and 2 reported college as the study site. The francophone countries visited by the respondents were France, Canada, and Haiti. The French-speaking guests came from France (3) and Haiti (1). One of those students revealed that her guest had

been an exchange student from France and that as a result had experienced the target culture firsthand by having visited the exchange student in France last summer. While the students' overwhelming first choice of a French-speaking country to visit was France, 10 did not offer a second choice. The other 10 chose either Canada (7), France (1), or Haiti (2).

The revised survey also called for the target group to identify French-speaking countries and famous people from any francophone country. Only 2 students named as many as six French-speaking countries, and the other 18 named no more than four. Six of the students in the target group could not identify even a single famous French-speaking person, and only one was able to name as many as four.

For the purpose of measuring the outcomes of this practicum, the writer administered a test (see Appendix E). The test was administered as a pretest at the beginning of the twelve-week period of study to assess pre-existing student knowledge of francophone cultures. As the posttest it was administered in the final week of the implementation process and was used to asses improvement in cultural skills of the target group and to determine the success of the practicum. The test contained objective components including short-answer identification, true/false statements, multiple-choice items, and matching, as well as term definitions.

A comparison of student responses on multiple-choice items of the test evinces improvement of student knowledge of French-speaking cultures. For example, in locating French-speaking areas on an unlabeled map, only 7 students were able to locate 7 or more on the pretest compared with 18 achieving this degree of mastery or better on the posttest. Furthermore, only 3 students were able to identify at least 7 of the 10 French-speaking countries in Africa on the pretest; and on the posttest all students achieved at least 70% mastery. In matching city-country combinations, 5 students performed at the 70% level or better on the pretest; 17 achieved this score or better on the posttest.

A comparison of correct responses made by the target group on the two administrations of the test on sections D, E, and F is presented in Table 6 and indicates the improvement made by the target group as the result of the implementation process, whereas Table 7 displays a comparison of scores made by the target group on the pretest and the posttest.

Table 6

Comparison of Correct Responses on Pretest and Posttest Made by 20 Respondents on Sections D, E, and F.

	Pretest	Posttest
Section D. True/False		
1. Activities of the young people are usually centered around their family.....13		20
2. The Peace Corps has sent Volunteers to almost all the French-speaking countries of Africa.....17		20
3. Some elements within French-speaking Canada are eager to break away from the country..... 4		20
4. The legal driving age is 16..... 9		19
5. Powerful and wealthy kingdoms once flourished in parts of Africa.....19		19
6. Football is their favorite sport..... 9		16
7. The word "Swiss" refers to both a language and a cheese..... 7		18
8. Europeans, including the French, drive on the left side of the road..... 4		18
9. All French-speaking countries have the same monetary system.....14		20

(table continues)

	Pretest	Posttest
10. Most of the people of the Caribbean have African ancestry	10	20
Section E. Identifying terms		
1. The country from which the Cajuns emigrated	3	16
2. The American state with the largest Haitian population	3	18
3. The only French-speaking country in South America	2	19
4. The present President of France	4	20
5. The French-speaking country in Europe famous for its diamond industry	3	19
6. The first black republic	6	20
7. The largest French-speaking city	1	20
8. The second largest French-speaking city	3	19
9. The country from which the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory	13	20
10. Poet and statesman from Senegal	0	16
Section F. Defining cultural terms		
1. Culture	2	19
2. Culture shock	4	18
3. Bilingual	1	17
4. Francophone	0	20
5. Francophobe	4	18

(table continues)

		Pretest	Posttest
6.	Francophile	0	16
7.	Negritude	0	14
8.	Americanization	2	16
9.	Xenophobia	2	18
10.	Stereotype	3	19

Table 7

Comparison of Scores on Pretest and Posttest of 20 Respondents

Respondent	Pretest	Posttest
1	53	100
2	42	98
3	57	98
4	60	98
5	48	97
6	68	95
7	42	93
8	50	92
9	37	90
10	43	90
11	50	90
12	48	88
13	37	83

(table continues)

Respondent	Pretest	Posttest
14	42	82
15	43	80
16	42	78
17	50	78
18	45	75
19	42	72
20	38	50

The results of the evaluation process of this practicum confirmed the success of the practicum. That 19 of the 20 students in the target group achieved at least 72% mastery revealed that the expected outcomes were exceeded. The conviction of the writer that a variety of student-centered activities is beneficial to the general learning process in any classroom and contributes significantly to the improvement of skills in the foreign language classroom was further confirmed. Also, the writer concluded that the success of the implementation was the result of careful scrutiny of the literature, thoughtful and thorough planning, the integration of strategies for teaching cultural concepts as a corollary to the teaching of the other skills of foreign language study, continuous monitoring of student progress,

and her willingness to relinquish her role as a traditional teacher.

Recommendations

1. The writer recommends that the teacher of foreign languages be an active advocate of culture by becoming a member of professional organizations for foreign language teachers.

2. The writer recommends that the teacher of foreign languages become a source of knowledge about the culture of the target language by studying the work of successful leaders in the field of culture and by traveling to countries where the target language is spoken.

3. The writer recommends that the teacher of foreign languages incorporate teaching strategies to include culture study in the curriculum in the initial phase of language study as well as in succeeding ones and allocate sufficient class time for the study of culture.

4. The writer recommends that the study of culture be incorporated into language study as an integral element of the basic skills of second language learning.

5. The writer recommends that culture be taught in the target language as much as possible.

6. The writer recommends that the teacher become an avid collector of accurate cultural information and realia to be used creatively in the teaching process.

7. The writer recommends that the teacher of foreign languages stress similarities between the native culture and that of the target language at least in the initial stage of second language study and guide the students to identify examples of overlapping of the two cultures.

8. The writer recommends that the foreign language teacher adopt teaching strategies to include student-centered activities in order to solicit optimal learning of students.

9. The writer recommends that the foreign language teacher learn the potential advantages to be obtained in assuming the role of facilitator, informant, and role model to students.

Dissemination

The writer has shared the practicum with other teachers of French within the school system. Furthermore, she plans to present workshops based on this practicum to county foreign language teachers and to members of the Metro South collaborative of the Academic Alliance, a national networking collaborative whose membership is composed of secondary and university educators.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Survey

Name _____

Date _____

1. Do you speak French outside of class?_____

   If yes, on what occasion(s)?_____

2. Do you personally know any French-speaking people?_____

   If yes, from where?_____

3. Outside of French class, have you ever seen a movie in French?_____

   If yes, where and when?_____

4. Name as many places as you can where French is spoken.

   _____

   _____

5. Name two (2) French-speaking countries you would like most to visit._____ and _____

   Why? _____

6. Most Americans think that French-speaking people _____.

7. Write two (2) comments you feel are true of French-speaking people.

   _____

   _____

8. Finish each of the following statements about French-speaking countries and/or the people.

   a. The language is_____.

   b. The men are_____.

c. The women are_____.

d. The young people are_____.

e. The fashions are_____.

9. Who, would you say, are some of the most important French-speaking people in history?

_____

_____

10. Name some famous French-speaking people who are living.

_____

11. Has being a French student changed the way you feel about French-speaking people? Yes_____. No_____.

If yes, how?_____

12. Has your family ever hosted a guest from another country? _____

If yes, from what country? _____

13. If you were writing a letter to a pen pal who knew little or nothing about American culture, what would you tell that pen pal to help him or her to understand the <u>real</u> America?_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

A. Consult the accompanying map in order to identify the location of each French-speaking area. Match the number with the letter that represents the correct answer.

1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____ 5._____ 6._____

7._____ 8._____ 9._____ 10._____ 11._____ 12._____

B. Fill in the blanks with the best answer you can.

1. The word "culture" means

_____

2. The term "culture shock" refers to

_____

3. A bilingual person is one who

_____

4. The word "francophone" means_____

5. Two differences between the cultures of French-speaking countries and that of the United States are

_____

and_____

6. The American state with the greatest number of French-speaking people is_____

7. There are_____French-speaking countries in Africa.

8. The two (2) principal languages of Canada are

_____ and _____

9. The first black republic in the world was_____

10. The two largest French-speaking cities in the world are_____and_____

C. Match each city with the country in which it is located by writing the letter that represents the correct choice.

1._____Geneva	A. Haiti
2._____Abidjan	B. Martinique
3._____Brussels	C. Senegal
4._____Paris	D. United States
5._____Dakar	E. Switzerland
6._____Fort-de-France	F. Canada
7._____Montreal	G. France
8._____Pointe-a-Pitre	H. Ivory Coast
9._____Lafayette	I. Guadeloupe
10._____Port-au-Prince	J. Belgium

D. Circle each of the following American cities that have a French name.

Baton Rouge Memphis Ft. Lauderdale Terre Haute
San Diego Des Moines St. Louis Chicago Mobile
Raleigh La Grange Corpus Cristi Honolulu Detroit
Cheyenne Louisville Atlanta Los Angeles La Jolla

E. Indicate your reaction to each of the following statements about French-speaking countries\people by writing YES if you agree and NO if you disagree.

1._____They put all their food at a meal on one plate.
2._____Bread is an eating utensil as well as a food.
3._____Activities of young people are usually centered around their family.
4._____They wear tight-fitting clothes.

5._____Their body language is the same as that of Americans.

6._____The way food looks is as important as the way it tastes.

7._____Foreign words are easily accepted into the French language.

8._____Unlike America, they have no regional language accents.

9._____Most of the people of the French-speaking islands of the Caribbean have African ancestry.

10._____People born in overseas departments of France have the same rights as those born in Paris.

11._____New York City has a large Haitian population.

12._____Football is their most popular sport.

13._____The word "creole" refers to a child born to a person from France and a person from Louisiana.

14._____The word "Noel" refers to the most important holiday of the year.

15._____They have little regard for the past.

APPENDIX C

WORLD MAP

WORLD MAP

APPENDIX D

REVISED SURVEY

REVISED SURVEY

Please respond to each of the following questions thoughtfully and honestly. The purpose of this survey is to learn about your contacts with French-speaking cultures.

A. Do you speak French outside of class?_____

If yes, with whom?_____

On what occasions?_____

B. Do you personally know anyone from a French-speaking country?_____

If yes, whom?_____

From which country?_____

C. Was anyone in your family born in a French-speaking country?_____

If yes, who?_____

In which country?_____

D. Has either of your parents studied French?_____

If yes, where?_____

E. Have you ever been to a French-speaking country?_____

If yes, to which one?_____

How long did you stay?_____

When did you go?_____

F. Has your family ever hosted a guest from a French-speaking country?_____

If yes, from which country?_____

When and how long?_____

G. Name as many French-speaking countries as you can.

_____

_____

H. Which French-speaking country would you like most to visit?_____

Why?_____

I. Which French-speaking country is your second choice to visit?_____

Why?_____

J. Name some important and/or famous people from French-speaking countries.

_____

_____

K. Why are you studying French?

_____

_____

L. What are some important reasons for understanding how people from different cultures live?

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

TEST

TEST

A. Using the map to identify the French-speaking areas listed below, match the number with the correct letter.

a. France	e. Louisiana	i. Martinique
b. Mali	f. Haiti	j. Switzerland
c. Guyana	g. Senegal	k. Guadeloupe
d. Belgium	h. Quebec	l. Madagascar

1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____ 5._____

6._____ 7._____ 8._____ 9._____ 10._____

B. From the list of African countries listed below, choose the 10 French-speaking countries.

a. Algeria	g. Ghana	m. Niger
b. Angola	h. Ivory Coast	n. South Africa
c. Botswana	i. Kenya	o. Swaziland
d. Cameroon	j. Mali	p. Tanzania
e. Chad	k. Mauritania	q. Tunisia
f. Ethiopia	l. Morocco	r. Zaire

1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____ 5._____

6._____ 7._____ 8._____ 9._____ 10._____

C. Write the letter that represents the country in which the city is located.

1._____	Geneva	A.	Haiti
2._____	Abidjan	B.	United States
3._____	Brussels	C.	Senegal
4._____	Paris	D.	Martinique
5._____	Dakar	E.	Switzerland
6._____	Fort-de-France	F.	Canada
7._____	Montreal	G.	France
8._____	Port-au-Prince	H.	Ivory Coast
9._____	Lafayette	I.	Guadeloupe
10._____	Pointe-a-Pitre	J.	Belgium

D. Respond to each of the following statements about French-speaking people/countries by writing TRUE or FALSE in the blanks.

1._____ Activities of the young people are usually centered around their family.

2._____ The Peace Corps has sent Volunteers to almost all the French-speaking countries of Africa.

3._____ Some elements within French-speaking Canada are eager to break away from the country.

4._____ The legal driving age is 16.

5._____ Powerful and wealthy kingdoms once flourished in parts of Africa.

6._____ Football is their favorite sport.

7._____ The word "Swiss" refers to both a language and a cheese.

8._____ Europeans, including the French, drive on the left side of the road.

9._____ All French-speaking countries have the same monetary system.

10._____ Most of the people of the Caribbean have African ancestry.

E. Write the word called for in each of the following terms.

1._____The country from which the Cajuns emigrated.

2._____The American state with the largest Haitian population.

3._____The only French-speaking country in South America.

4._____The present President of France.

5._____The French-speaking country in Europe famous for its diamond industry.

6._____The first black republic.

7._____The largest French-speaking city.

8._____The second largest French-speaking city.

9._____The country from which the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory.

10._____Poet and statesman from Senegal.

F. Define briefly the following terms.

1. Culture_____

2. Culture shock_____

3. Bilingual_____

4. Francophone_____

5. Francophobe_____

6. Francophile_____

7. Negritude_____

8. Americanization_____

9. Xenophobia_____

10. Stereotype_____